

# Hit The Beach!

## The Southern California ASL Club Newsletter



February 2003 Volume 8, Number 1

### The President's Corner

by Jim Aikens

West Coast Melee VI has come and gone. If you were unable to attend, you missed a great time. We had a total of 47 attendees. This was slightly lower than last year but given the economy's negative impact on tournament attendance around the country, we were not displeased with the figure. Once again we met at Embassy Suites, LAX for the West's largest ASL event. About 20 guys joined us at our 'Early Bird' program on Thursday evening (January 30th) for sandwiches, beer, soda and a warm-up game. The Melee started on Friday morning at 9:00 am in the Ambassador Ballroom. On Saturday, 16 guys opted to compete in two mini-tournaments, "Comrades in Arms" and "Blitzkrieg", while others pursued a Melee plaque or played pick-up games. On Saturday night, Shel Ryland launched "The Hero Game", with a rowdy crowd of ASLers. On Sunday morning, the playoff games for the minis and the final games of the Melee got started while everyone else played pick-up games for fun. And when the smoke cleared, Sheldon Ryland came out on top as Melee Champion, with Eric Morton placing 2nd and new member John Bibler placing 3rd. Matt Cicero took the crown in "Comrades in Arms" and Ron Mosher captured the championship in "Blitzkrieg". Once again, SoCalASL members made a clean sweep of the plaques. Congratulations to these fine ASL players. I said it on the mailing list and I'll say it again: Each of these gentlemen embodies what WCM and SoCalASL is all about; they are great players who are a pleasure to sit across the table from. The weekend featured great games, plenty of SoCalASL camaraderie, great food, free cocktails, beautiful plaques and tee shirts and most of all, a butt load of fun for the guys who came. Perhaps the most exciting part of WCM was seeing the release of our Club's scenario pack, **Melee Pack I**, with 6 well-tested, interesting scenarios in full color. By the end of the weekend, we had sold 40 packs and we have piles of orders coming in from around the world already.

I say this every year; West Coast Melee is a huge event with so much going on. It takes a lot of effort from a lot of guys to make this happen and keep the Club running all year and I wanted to take a moment to thank them. Matt Cicero did an absolutely countless number of things, including the design and printing of all the registration packs, handouts, posters and bingo cards and buying the food for the Early Bird program and managing the fi-

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### Marching Orders

by Matt Cicero

It's 2003 and another issue of *Hit The Beach!* is in the can. After some soul searching in January, we decided to switch our publishing schedule so that the first issue each year will now come out after West Coast Melee. We think it will be fun to write about some of the good times at WCM shortly after the big event while our much-battered minds still retain enough memory of how things went.

This issue, we feature the Design Notes of SoCal ASL's **Melee Pack I**. If you don't have a copy of **Melee Pack I** yet, no worries...the

Notes are interesting all on their own. If you do have a copy, then you'll get a better idea of how we pulled everything together, scenario by scenario. Personally, I liked Robert's approach to Design Notes...

"My guess is that a fair number of the design notes will go something like this:

Scenario MP3 Designer's Notes:

I was reading in \_\_\_\_ about how a German battery of 105mm field artillery had ascended a ridge and was firing on an American unit in the village below. I designed this scenario principally around the effects of these guns, abstracted to act as a 1 hex OBA. But then those fu####g play testers got to it, and they might as well pissed in my Cheerios or worse..."

Given room and time constraints, I didn't have a chance to include one of our signature Scenario Cheat Sheets this issue. Ah well...maybe I'll get two done for next time to make up for it!

Well, I'm off to work on a new scenario, fill a few more orders for **Melee Pack I** try to find time to PLAY a game and enjoy my little girl's 1-Year birthday party...and DEFINITELY not in

that order! (I swear she said "panzer" the other day but my wife emphatically disagrees...)

As always, please consider writing an article for a future issue...I am especially interested in reviews of scenarios you've enjoyed, books you've read, tactics you've used and products you've tried. Drop me a line if you have an idea!

Till next time!

Editor@socalasl.com



# West Coast Melee VI AAR

By Jim Aikens

Congratulations to this year's winners! Add up skilled play, lots of laughs and good sportsmanship and you can see why these guys are champions in our eyes:

**West Coast Melee Champion**  
Sheldon Ryland

**WCM 2nd Place**  
Eric Morton

**WCM 3rd Place**  
John Bibler

**Blitzkrieg Mini-T Champion**  
Ron Mosher

**Comrades in Arms Mini-T Champion**  
Matt Cicero

WCM VI turned out to be one of the funnest WCMs we've ever had. While I wanted to give some much deserved recognition to the winners of the event, I also wanted to fill up a little white space with some memorable quotes from the weekend...

*Our new online/PayPal pre-registration system was a hit...*

"I went to socalasl.com, pressed "WCM", went to the PayPal page, and within 1 minute pre-registered, bought tshirt and renewed SoCal membership for next year. Very efficient, highly recommended. I give it a 10."

*Just before the event, folks were already showing enthusiasm...*

"My wife called me a little while ago. She said that when she picked up her son at school he told her that he saw someone wearing a West Coast Melee tshirt. She

asked him to describe this ASL person and it appears that it was our own Fred Timm (last year's WCM champion). Fred's already getting into the mood."

*Lending a helping hand...*

"...of course it won't open your bottle. It's a CAN opener..."

*During a game, you just never know what's gonna get the job done...*

"OOOOOH, BABY JESUS! GIMME A TWO!!!"

*A comfortable playing area is always appreciated...*

"I don't know what Chuck said to them but HE got his own lamp out of the deal!"

*Priorities, priorities...*

"...we're gonna have to hold there...I'm gonna miss Happy Hour...be back in a minute..."

*The fine art of kibitzing...*

"Hey! How many guys do you need to make that move? Come on, already!"

*The newly initiated...*

"...man, that Woody's crap is just KILLING my stomach...have you ever eaten there?"

*Robert summed it up best...*

"In conclusion, it was a \*GREAT\* West Coast Melee."

**Looking forward to next year!**

## Burnt Offerings at Bryan's !!!

Monrovia, here we go! Bryan Earll has offered up his spacious patio for a Four-Alarm Fire-Fest on May 24. Some of you may remember the tasty BBQ last year at Bryan's to complement some final playtesting of Melee Pack I. Well in May, we are returning to Bryan's and this time, the BBQ won't be the only thing on fire! The theme for this little One Day Event will be Flamethrowers. That's right, we are going to be toasting up the cardboard counters since each scenario offered up for play will involve at least one flame-throwing device.

The roasting begins at 9:00 AM. The exact format hasn't been finalized yet but you can count on at least two rounds. Awards for Most Hexes on Fire and Most Burning Wrecks are very likely. We are currently pulling together ideas for the scenario list so now would be a good time to suggest your favorite small-medium scenario involving flaming death!

The Club is sponsoring the BBQ so you can expect to find plenty of burgers, dogs, chips, drinks and fixins' waiting for you. Feel free, however, to bring your own BBQ fare if you prefer some carne asada, chicken or what have you. Bryan is a Grill Meister, trained for long years in the back country of Arkansas. If he can make grilled muskrat taste good, just think what he can do for your New York strip steak!

We'll have plenty of tables available but we may need some extra chairs. Please bring a folding chair or two if you have one to help out.

As this is the first One Day of 2003, it is also the first One Day under the new "Pay Less, Get More" policy of the Club. There will be NO One Day Fee for members and non-members will pay only \$5. That's right...it really will be a completely free event for members!

If you haven't purchased one, yet, we will have copies of Melee Pack I on hand for sale. And remember to bring your Club dues if you haven't paid yet (\$15).

**See you there!!**

### Address:

737 Ocean View Avenue  
Monrovia, CA 91016

Phone: (626) 303-4004

Note: Look for the red front door.

## Words That Echo...

"Suddenly a Panther appeared to support us. It was a terrible sight as we saw the tank churning through the dead and wounded."

**Oscha. Erwin Wohlgemuth**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Company**  
**12<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Division**  
**June 11, 1944, Rots, France**

# Roll Call ! ...Robert Feinstein !

## **HTB! : Where are you from?**

**RF:** I am a native Southern Californian - born and raised in a part of Anaheim that resembled Board 2 at the time, but that has since come to look much more like Board 41. I've lived in San Diego since I moved here to attend graduate school. With luck, I'll never live anywhere else.

## **HTB! : Any military experience?**

**RF:** Nope. I've always been interested in serving, but my true love since childhood has been the life sciences. Military service and life sciences don't go together very well (especially biochemistry and pharmacology, unless you are serving in Iraq).

## **HTB! : What got you started with ASL? When?**

**RF:** I was a hard-core gamer by age 12, playing mostly AD&D, Cosmic Encounters, Car Wars, etc. Then I met Sean, a Squad Leader player in my 10th grade history class (back in 1980). He had solitaired every scenario in Squad Leader and Cross of Iron and was eagerly awaiting the release of Crescendo of Doom.

## **HTB! : How did you learn the game?**

**RF:** Sean and I played SL perhaps 100 times since we didn't have anyone else to play. He would beat me ~20 times in a row, then I'd pour over the rule books, then beat him ~10 times in a row, then he'd do the same, and so on. Eventually, we both became respectable players but we were totally lacking in the breadth of opponents that it takes to create an above average SL player. When I moved to San Diego in 1987, I met Eric Johnson who introduced me to the San Diego ASL Club. Hallelujah!

## **HTB! : Why do you like ASL over other games/forms of entertainment?**

**RF:** There are so many reasons why I love ASL. Let me count the ways... 1) I find ASL both mentally stimulating and relaxing, although you wouldn't know it if you've seen me almost stroke out during a game; 2) I find ASL to be the most tactically challenging game around; 3) I enjoy the camaraderie of ASL, and have benefited greatly from my many long lasting ASL friendships; 4) My wife tolerates my ASL addiction and understands that its part of who I am that even predates our relationship of 17 years; and 5) I am obsessed with World War II history. Lastly, to quote Herman, "If you have time to play anything else, you have time to play Squad Leader" - truer words were never spoken.

## **HTB! : How do you like to play ASL? FtF, Tournneys, VASL...**

**RF:** Face to face is best, and I love tournament play. But the reality of parenthood and self employment dictates that VASL-by-email is my only viable means of playing ASL outside of special occasions like ASLOK or WCM. I'm not complaining - I think VASL-by-email is a great way to play!

## **HTB! : Do you like to play Fast? Slow? Medium?**

**RF:** I like to play fast. I play slow. Sometimes very slow.

## **HTB! : How often do you get to play?**

**RF:** Unfortunately, I've been averaging two F-to-F games a year outside of ASLOK and WCM. Pathetic! I used to play twice a week like clockwork, but those days have long since passed.

## **HTB! : Let's talk about some of your favorites in ASL...**

### **Favorite vehicle?**

**RF:** The British ARVE - what more could you ask for (other than

AP)? A Fanatic crew with 4 DCs, great armor, a 200mm MA that can eliminate Pillboxes and Minefields, SMOKE aplenty, decent MGs, plus bells and whistles like Fascine. Surround that sucker with infantry and hold the enemy armor at bay using other tanks, and you've got some serious capabilities!

The British Wasp is great as well - very small and nimble, FT-equipped. Yarr!!! I really had a great time with the two Wasps in SP96 Husum Hotfoot while at the last ASLOK. While we're on the topic of FT tanks, I recently had my buns toasted by a Russian OT-34 with a 10-3 armored assaulting beneath it. That left quite an impression - ouch!

### **Favorite nationality?**

**RF:** Americans, of course! Well, except for their morale...German is too easy an answer, but they are certainly the most flexible and forgiving of nationalities in ASL. I really like early war stuff, and Allied Minors have been good to me. Japanese are great fun, but they are so atypical in their capabilities and the fun only lasts until you've been reduced to a mass of staggering half-squads. How's that for an evasive answer?

### **Favorite troop type?**

**RF:** Fanatic. Oh, that's not what you meant? OK, then I'd have to say 66-7's - lots of firepower, great range, Smoke, assault fire, elevated broken-side morale and just enough guts to stay in the fight.

### **Favorite theater of war?**

**RF:** I like Eastern Front the best, although honestly I like it all. I am particularly fond of early war scenarios, regardless of their theater. I also enjoy non-WWII theaters (such as the Spanish Civil War, early Korean War, etc.).

### **Favorite tactical situation? Why?**

**RF:** I love combined arms for both sides, especially for meeting engagements and static defenses. I also really like Night scenarios. I only get to play them in the ASLOK Night mini-tournament. That's a great way to play them, since the more esoteric mini themes attract some really high quality players. Night is much easier than people seem to think - it just takes some getting used to. The secret as the defender is to plan for both the high NVR early game and the low NVR end game. For the attacker, its all about key death stacks and avenues of advance. Finally, you can count on turns where star shells are everywhere, and other turns where none go up.

### **Favorite scenarios? Ok, list your Dogs, too...**

**RF:** There are so many scenarios I love. Hill 621 and Hill 253.5 are both great, and many of the Streets of Fire scenarios are excellent. My most recent favorite among Night scenarios is BB8 Castello Fatato. That is a strange and entertaining scenario, with extreme winter on desert boards, a few scattered buildings, an upper building level starts the game ablaze and illuminating hexes around it, and the attacking Italians get to do a Human Wave. Although I've played plenty of dogs, I don't commit them to memory.

### **Favorite product produced to date? Why?**

**RF:** The Southern California ASL Club's Melee Pack I is way up there - what an excellent set of interesting and balanced scenarios! However, my favorite ASL product of all time is, without question, Streets of Fire. Sadly, my least favorites include Hedgerow Hell. If

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**ARVE Crewman Feinstein**



# MELEE PACK I: DESIGN NOTES

As we were putting the final touches on Melee Pack I, we decided to write up some design notes to help players get a better understanding of what we had worked so hard to create. Rather than publish these notes in the Pack, we thought it might be fun to let everyone read about the creative effort that went into the Pack. What follows is an overview by our Playtest Coordinator followed by notes from each of the designers about their scenarios. —ed.



## An Overview of Melee Pack I By Matt Romey

What you hold in your hands was over a year in the making. Before you ask yourself “why do we need another scenario pack?” let us explain the evolution of this project, and how and why we made it in the first place.

As the back page of the Pack says, members of the Southern California ASL Club have been involved for years in playtesting and scenario design/development. We have supported some terrific products by Bound- ing Fire Productions, Front Line Productions, Heat of Battle, Kinetic Energy and MMP, to name a few. Given the talent pool available to us within the Club, in the past we had encouraged scenario submissions for inclusion in our newsletter, *Hit The Beach!*. But after a few years of putting one or two scenarios in each quarterly newsletter, we realized that most scenarios were just not receiving the attention they deserved. The reasons for this were obvious and understandable: 1) Some of the scenarios were fairly green and early in their development and 2) The newsletter was only distributed to the Club at that time and so there was a limited audience seeing these scenarios.

To remedy this, and to do justice to the often inspired scenarios coming before us, we envisaged a project to motivate ourselves to do the job right: a scenario pack containing a number of well-conceived and well-playtested scenarios, to be developed separately from the newsletter and with a deadline of West Coast Melee 2003. Hopefully, this would motivate us to achieve the excellence we knew we were capable of.

We got the effort underway by forming our Playtest Team and setting up a Yahoo Group to handle our conversations. Then we asked everyone to send in scenario designs so we could start the process of playtesting and proofing. Since this was our first attempt to create a scenario pack, we had only a few scenarios in the hopper in early 2002. Then we made things harder by excluding any scenario designs that had appeared in any publication or on any website previously. That left us with nothing! Thankfully, over the next few months, designs began to flow in for evaluation, playtesting and refinement by the Playtest Team.

One of the hardest parts of the process was organizing the playtesting. We had, thankfully, a lot of folks interested in seeing the scenario pack succeed. That meant we had playtests underway and designs being reviewed throughout the year. However, it was often a challenge to collect feedback and then process it quickly for the next playtest round. We had several instances where folks involved in a VASL game found that a new version of the scenario they were playing had been issued based on some FtF games! Fortunately, everyone stuck together and made the best of things. In the last half of 2002, we really hit our stride with the organization of several Playtests Days. These events made a huge difference as a large group of a dozen or so players got together and played through a few of our scenarios at the same time. It really helped us knock the rough spots off some of the designs.

Another tough part of the process was deciding which scenarios were going to make it into the Pack. We had scenario designs submitted throughout the year...even as late as October! In the end, the thing which

made Melee Pack I really shine was the fact that we decided to go with only those scenarios which we felt were truly finished...ones that we were convinced were worthy of ASL players everywhere. That meant that initially we really had no idea how many scenarios would make it into the Pack. We could have put 8 or even 10 scenario into this pack but we chose not to. When you sit down to play a scenario from the Southern California ASL Club, we fully expect it to be time well spent – not wasted on unrealized designs, foolish errors, bad proofing, or poor playtesting. So, in early January, we decided on 6 scenarios.

Backing up those final 6 scenarios are the Scenario Cheat Sheets. If you haven't seen one before, then stop by our Club website, [socialasl.com](http://socialasl.com), and download one of our recent issues of *Hit The Beach!* to get an idea. Matt Cicero developed these sheets a while back and has been including them in our newsletter for some time. These sheets give you, at a glance, all the important information for every vehicle and gun in a given scenario. Even better, the information is specifically tailored based on the scenario date, special rules, weather or any other scenario-specific information. In the end, you have a quick reference guide that saves you a lot of time looking up various rules, To Kill numbers, etc. while you play. They even help you speed up set up by helping you analyze the forces in play quickly...allowing you to see things like just how easily his AP shot will penetrate your tank's armor or what special ammunition his tank is carrying and its Depletion Number. One way or another, we think you will find these Cheat Sheets very useful.

January was an interesting month, to say the least. Rounds and rounds of proofing and corrections occurred over a three-week period. We caught quite a few bloopers in our scenario cards! It was a lot of work and the Playtest Team really did a terrific job under a lot of pressure. In the end, we made it in time for West Coast Melee...with only one 11<sup>th</sup> Hour-Gotta-Reprint-This Stuff issue. Not too bad.



## The Wolves' Last Tooth [MP1] Design Notes By Bryan Earl

Unlike other scenarios that I have worked on, *The Wolves' Last Tooth* was conceived in an evening on a whim. There wasn't a book or a battle, there was a brief conversation with Matthew Cicero about what makes a game fun and then a “what if” went off in my head. The idea we shared was simply that a game based around movement and finesse was more fun to play. The match up that I wanted to see was: two forces of equally poor quality men facing off against each other. On getting home I thought about the Italian-Greek campaign. I grabbed a couple of boards that I thought well represented a sparsely populated and hilly area in Greece. The problem was that all of the hill boards are used too often and didn't offer enough variety. But when I put a couple of the depression boards together, they looked pretty cool...so the boards were picked out.

The troops pretty much fell out of the box. What I thought would be clever was to see if a small group of brittle troops (the Italians) could fight their way through a numerically superior but equally lousy force. The final OoB in Melee Pack I changed very slightly from its original design. A little here, a little there: we added a tank and a second LMG.... But WYSIWYG... Enough said there...

The problem then became where to place the scenario in history. There were scant references in my books...mostly just massive movement of troops and large battles going badly against the Greeks.

So I dialed an expert. I called Chris Castellana and said; “here is the fight, find me a reference that works enough to provide an encounter and aftermath.” A couple of days later Chris called and said, “I have one for

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you". But the action was in winter, not October, and so my dry streambeds became wet and soggy and utterly impassable. That wouldn't work, so I decided on ground snow, which became an epic debate amongst the play testers since it would considerably change the scenario at a time when most folks thought this one was nearly finished. In the end, the snow was put in, it worked and we stuck with it. I want to thank Chris for providing the research and story to put the counters into play.

The last interesting debate was over the Objective. After reading the story of the battle, I saw that the centerpiece of the drama was really in this courageous Italian officer who despite the situation he found himself in, had acted thoughtfully and deliberately and fought his way back to his lines. I wanted the game to be about preserving troops and winning using every bit of skill, courage and luck a player could come up with. For the Italians, getting a 92 off the board while leaving his troops behind didn't feel right. So I stuck to my gut feeling of making exiting MMCs the key to victory. I think that this premise is what gives the scenario character. It's about the brittle troops' survival and return, and a leader who left no one behind.

#### Things to remember about Wolves...

This scenario is all about maneuver and pressure...knowing when to move, when to push hard and when to regroup. Remember to plan for the impact of ground snow on movement. Remember the rules for Inexperienced Personnel. Remember to read up on Allied Minors and Italians, especially when Greeks fight Italians.



**Curtain Kall [MP2]**  
*Design Notes By Scott Faulk*

This scenario uses the Nphum Ga map to represent the Kall River Gorge in the Hürtgen Forest. The action itself centers around a crossing of the gorge at a place called Mestrengrer Mill. The battle occurred on 6 November, 1944 as the Americans pushed across the gorge from Vossenack to retake Schmidt. While the terrain is somewhat open around the main Hürtgen villages (Hürtgen, Germete, Schmidt, etc.) the areas "off the beaten track" were thickly forested with muddy horse paths that were hastily turned into vehicle routes. We used a Special Rule to create one of these tracks on the Nphum Ga map.

The Germans suffered a pre-attack shelling (as often happened in the Hürtgen Forest) and then the attack commenced. The Germans hunkered down in log bunkers and in deep foxholes to escape the shelling. When the Americans appeared, they opened up with mortar and machine gun fire. The Americans captured the "mill" (on the NG map it's represented by the huts just east of the middle of the board), and crossed a platoon over the gorge. The Germans reinforced with panzers (assumed to be Mark IVs) and drove the Americans back across the gorge. Another standstill set-piece in the Hürtgen.

The Germans are a mish-mash of infantry units backed by the 116th Pz Div. They get middling leadership, middling troops and an ELR of 2... appropriate for a German unit in this time and place. The Germans used a wide variety of fortifications in the Forest. Mines, wire, foxholes and pillboxes were all very common. To this end, the German player is allowed to purchase fortifications. Given the widespread use of "Cleared Fire Zones", i.e. locations that had been ranged and sited to especially deadly effect, we felt a special rule was needed to properly recreate this tactic. After a number of interesting suggestions and some lively debate, we settled on something that was simple and playable.

The Americans are elements of the 28th Keystone ("Bloody Bucket") Division, 110th Inf Reg., the 707th Tank Battalion and the 893rd TD Battalion, cobbled together to form Task Force Ripple. The infantry was supported by M10s, M4s, halftracks, jeeps and weasels. Leadership was middling. Troop quality and ELR were a source of debate during scenario development. The US troops were very green in this battle, but we all

agreed that too high a ratio of 536s with 3MF would bog down play in this rough terrain. For the same reason we gave the Americans an ELR of 3, even though an ELR of 2 might have been more appropriate. The German Advantage reduces the ELR to 2. We included a CVP cap to discourage reckless use of troops.

From the beginning we looked for a way to include the American OBA. While an off-board observer would work, it wasn't very historical. The US artillery was based in Vossenack at the time and German positions were "known" and were pre-registered, to be fired on when needed. Pre-game bombardment might have worked, but the effectiveness of the bombardment rules is usually very disappointing; plus, that would be too close to Maggot Hill for comfort. In the end, we decided on an observation plane; not only was it reasonable from a historical perspective, it really added an interesting nuance to the scenario.

#### Things to remember about Curtain Kall...

This scenario has the feel of a bullfight. Can the German's wear down and slow down the American bull before their defensive works are overcome? Look over the Cheat Sheet before you choose your forces. Look over the setup restrictions carefully. Read through the special rules carefully.



**Holy Ground [MP3]**  
*Design Notes By Matt Cicero*

Holy Ground is a scenario inspired by Edward Miller's book, A Dark and Bloody Ground. It depicts the high tide of the German assault into Vossenack on November 6th, 1944, as the fighting reached the town church just a short distance east of the 2nd Battalion CP. A surge past this point would rupture the command structure of the units in Vossenack and close the main supply link to the American troops east of the Kall River. If the Germans could be held here, the supply line would remain open and the German assault rebuffed.

Holy Ground tries to capture the extremely confused close-quarters fighting that took place in Vossenack. American reinforcements trickle in to help support the thin line of infantrymen cobbled together by the battalion senior officers. Meanwhile, the Germans surge forward knowing they must break the American line before too many units can enter the fray. When I sat down to pull this scenario together, I had three design features I hoped to capture: 1) flexibility in both the American defense and the German offense; 2) variable OoBs; and 3) an Objective that allowed for more than one way to win.

The first version of Holy Ground utilized about 2/3 of Board 41 with the Germans and Americans starting across the street from each other along the long axis of the board. Waves of troops appeared on each side... halftrack mounted infantry, tanks, aircraft...and the Germans could call upon off board artillery support in the form of a large caliber direct fire gun. There was opportunity for each side to take buildings since the side with the most buildings would win. Unfortunately, it didn't really work. Everyone agreed that Holy Ground did seem to capture the chaotic feel of the fight for Vossenack but it didn't work as a scenario for ASL. It was too chaotic. It left the impression that no plan was necessary for either side...just let the dice create the opportunities and work from there.

Rather than scrap it entirely, I decided to try to master some of the chaos. I'm not sure how other folks design scenarios but for me, it's all about the map. I like to see the battlefield before I can finalize anything else for a scenario. With Holy Ground, I knew Board 41 was the right choice just as I knew the hills and gully had to be removed. What I figured out was that if I wanted to maintain this effort as a tourney-sized scenario, I'd have to cut down on the playing area. In the end, I folded the board in half and turned it 90 degrees...and viola! I had my map... small enough to keep the counter count low and large enough to allow some flexibility in both defense and offense. But our playtesters weren't satisfied. They wanted a few more changes to the playing area. The row-

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houses had to go in favor of single hex buildings to allow the Americans to put up a stronger defense. After a few rounds of testing, it also became apparent that the original town church design, which included an RB Cellar, didn't add much to the defense. Finally, the Americans started setting up further and further back when it became apparent that the LOSs in the Board 41 village were a lot more open than you would think. Forward-placed units tended to get cut off. To fix this, two shellholes counters were given to the Americans to help with routing, fire grouping or just about anything else you could think of. And with all the shelling Vossenack suffered, it even made sense historically.

Next up were the force selections. I liked what I had done before but decided to eliminate one entire wave of reinforcements. With fewer units, players would have to really think about how they would use each one. It was also decided that the off board artillery concept had to go. Not only was it awkward to use, it tended to hover unerringly over the town church, making it extremely difficult to defend. To better simulate the effect of the German shelling from “BB Ridge” we upped the German SAN to 4. This worked extremely well and allowed us to dump a big fat Special Rule. The American Engineers, represented by the 667s, were not originally assault engineers. They got their upgrade in response to the shrinking U.S. OoB and the need to add a little more anti-tank capability and the desire to allow the Americans more freedom of movement via smoke grenades. The Germans lost a gun choice as the AA gun disappeared from the OoB. Not only was it a stretch historically, it created the possibility of taking out one of the more powerful American units, the FB. Overall, the Germans came out about the same and the Americans lost some firepower and mobility...but the scenario became far more balanced and the choices for each player became much harder trade-offs.

Finally, the Objective was altered to fit more closely with the current map configuration and forces involved. Originally, the Objective included the taking of a number of buildings near the church by game end or the taking of all locations of the church (which would result in an immediate victory). The church was de-emphasized so that it was now worth more than the average building if taken but it no longer provided an instant victory. The Germans were given a larger number of locations to capture near the church to compensate the Americans for having fewer units with which to defend.

The final version of Holy Ground wound up with a feel similar to the original concept but with far more playability at the expense of some unwieldy chrome. The Germans have some interesting force choices and several routes of attack. The Americans have a variety of units at their disposal and a large number of defensive setup options. The variable OoBs, the broad entry areas for reinforcements and the initial American concealment all create some significant Fog of War in Holy Ground. As a result, the scenario has nice tension from the first roll to the last and some pretty high replay value.

#### Things to remember about Holy Ground...

This scenario has a strong give and take feel to it with each side gaining the upper hand only to lose the initiative or momentum as the other side obtains more reinforcements. Look over the Cheat Sheet before you choose your forces. Look over the board...there are a lot of unexpectedly good LOSs. Remember the terrain changes. Remember that the church has 3 Locations: Ground, Level 1 and Steeple.



#### Bleeding the First [MP4] Design Notes By Matt Cicero

A Dark and Bloody Ground turned out to be a great source for scenario ideas. North of the fighting in the forests around Vossenack, Schmidt and Kommerscheidt, the Big Red One was tasked with breaking out of the attritional fighting under the trees. Gressenich and Hamich, two farming villages, blocked the entrance to the Stolberg Corridor. While the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry

reduced Gressenich, the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry began its assault on Hamich to the northeast. The 48<sup>th</sup> Grenadiers of the 12<sup>th</sup> VGD let the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry move up close to their dug in positions in the woods outside Hamich before opening up with a deadly fusillade. The assault was blunted and there is some doubt as to whether the main line of resistance outside of Hamich was ever breached.

The account of this fighting seemed to draw me a picture of the battlefield that I was able to capture using Boards 4 and 5. I thought it was funny that of all the combinations of boards I tried, it was these two classic boards that made it happen for me. Given that the woods dominate so much terrain, I knew I'd have to allow for an American assault across a wide front to spread out the defenders a bit. I also knew that I had to break up the woods a bit with some open ground overlays to allow some layering to the defenders. Given the rain that had been falling so frequently at this time in early and mid November 1944, I thought the wet EC was appropriate and also nicely dealt with the issue of pyromaniac Germans torching the entire wood line. With the map in hand, the rest just seemed to fall in place.

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was tasked with breaking through to Hamich and taking the village, I thought an exit-type Objective would be the right choice. However, it seemed to me that there was too much ground to defend and that American assaulters would not engage in any vicious close-in fighting if all they had to do was slip off a board edge. So I decided to make a section of the board the victory area and require the Americans to get some troops into it and survive.

The variable OoB choices for both sides allowed for some personal style expression in both troops and vehicles. And I liked the idea of a “secret bonus” to the forces to add just a touch more FoW. The German was given a pretty clean slate to build whatever evil defenses he could think of. He could also hide a few guns around the place for some surprising shots on unwary American tanks racing to the rear to cut rout paths. Meanwhile, the American could choose his own forces to suit his playing style in terms of vehicles and troops. He could also decide how to split them up for his assault. More than a few German playtesters found that they had built their defenses a bit too heavily to one side only to have the Americans hit them from the other direction. It made for some very desperate late game fighting!

Playtesting seemed to validate most of the original design for this scenario despite the large number of variables in each OoB. The only issue that seemed to crop up repeatedly was the German OBA. Representing the remnants of the artillery park that had been in the Hamich area, the 105mm shells enabled the Germans to break up the American attack at some critical points. In Bleeding, the wily German playtesters quickly realized that having a 20FP OBA FFE land on some bunched up Americans in the woods tended to make a mess of any attack. After three separate games went down to the wire only to have the OBA obliterate the American forces at the last moment, we nearly dropped the entire module. In the end, the threat of the OBA, it was agreed, had helped channel the American attack...so we wound up settling for a modified version of OBA that made the final cut as a special rule.

Bleeding plays differently every time. I saw some pretty amazing German setups...from the all-HIP force to the all-AP Minefield defense. I saw some folks bet the farm on one side of the board or the other. I also saw some incredibly well-planned layered defenses, designed to slow down the Americans and keep them off-balance. The American playtesters used a wide variety of force combos and attack options. Some ran headlong into the defenses and tried to bull their way through. Some slipped around the edges. Some employed a rather impressive leapfrog assault. No matter the forces employed, it seemed that there was a lot of give and take in every game...and that more than anything is why I liked how Bleeding turned out in the end.

#### Things to remember about Bleeding...

The momentum of this scenario should build during the American approach as pressure increases and defenses are revealed, then sharply rise to a clashing climax in the last Turn or two as the Americans force their way into the victory area. Look over the Cheat Sheet before you

(Continued on page 7)



choose your forces. Remember, the German OBA has a reduced effect on the six outer hexes of the FFE area. All hedges are walls.



### **The Rats of Hamich [MP5] Design Notes By Matt Cicero**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry had been decimated taking the woods outside of Hamich. The Americans had found more of the brutal attritional fighting they had hoped to avoid by attacking into the Stolberg Corridor. The 16<sup>th</sup>'s assault was hastily reorganized and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was ordered to take the village of Hamich.

Once again, the 48<sup>th</sup> Grenadiers were to face off against the men of the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry and once again they had dug in and prepared their defenses well.

The descriptions of the fighting in and around Hamich really sparked my interest. The 48<sup>th</sup> Grenadiers created a well-prepared defensive network in Hamich that survived an intense preparatory artillery bombardment. The element that really captured my imagination for this scenario was the specific mention of the tunnels and trenches that had been prepared by the Germans to connect the cellars of the ruined buildings.

I really liked the idea of a superior American force assaulting the town with armor support and the outnumbered defenders fighting a collapsing defense centered around their defensive works and the remnants of the artillery units that had not yet retreated from this position. My initial idea was to use three half boards with a hill for the German guns set off to the side and the town centered in the middle. The more I looked at it, though, the more I realized that I could keep the basic concept intact and really ratchet up the tension if I went with one half board and a very short scenario length.

I was a little nervous about Rats turning into a one-shot wonder given the short game length and the relatively low counter count. To spice things up, I added in the following: 1) The Objective was devised with two ways to win...take the buildings or destroy the German guns. This gave the American a choice for setting up the attack. It also gave the German something to think about in his setup as well, since the optimal position for the guns might be too exposed. The RB Cellars under each building initially caused some concern but we tweaked the Objective to require the Americans to control only the ground level Location of a building hex. This turned out to be an oft-misunderstood element of the scenario during playtesting. 2) The Americans were given a variable OoB and a choice for side of entry. The Germans received a variable OoB also including some interesting choices for defensive works. 3) I added in the variable rubble special rule to allow for some variety in the map for each playing. 4) The Mud was added to encourage American players to plan ahead and keep moving since there would be no way to race across the board at the last minute or to quickly shift the focus of an attack.

A few playtests later, we had a good idea of where to tweak. The guns lost their ability to use HIP to avoid the sleazy move of hiding one somewhere to avoid the Objective. In compensation, we gave the Germans a few more concealments to better camouflage their position with dummy stacks. It was here that the Objective was fine tuned with regard to the number of building locations the American needed to capture. The German players often wanted to create an “Alamo” in which to retreat, but now it was a bigger area to defend. Finally, we made some minor adjustments to the American force choices to make them more useful and thus, more equal.

Given that our playtesters tried nearly every option presented in Rats, I'd say we not only gave this scenario a thorough work-over...but that it really did wind up with a fair amount of variety and good replay value....just as I had hoped.

### **Things to remember about Rats...**

This scenario should be tense, exciting and very close throughout the 4.5

turns of play. Look over the Cheat Sheet before you choose your forces. Mud is in play so read the cited rules sections and remember how it impacts movement and SMOKE. Read the VC carefully: this game is not about building control...it is about control of ground level Locations. Remember to keep those American Infantry Platoons together for entry and remember that everyone entering from the East does so on Turn 1 and everyone entering from the South does so on Turn 2. Germans...don't forget to record your tunnels!



### **The Marnach Strongpoint [MP6] Design Notes By Jim Aikens**

The design idea for The Marnach Strongpoint (TMS) first came to me shortly before WCM IV. I wanted to design three D.Y.O. scenarios for an experimental Mini-Tournament format. Thus, the first incarnation of TMS was a very loose, D.Y.O. outline. I like desperate, fall-back defense scenarios with tight Objectives. I also like scenarios with variable Orders of Battle.

Even though this was supposed to be D.Y.O., I wanted a historical situation. That being the case, I needed a battle with a large amount of “what if...” in it. In other words, a battle where the engaged forces could have historically been of a variety of different types because of the available forces in the area. The battle at Marnach Village, on the first day of the Battle of the Bulge, proved a perfect situation to meet all of these points.

On the American side, the crossroads position was meant to be a speed-bump in case of a German attack. There were a wide variety of troop types in the immediate vicinity on the day of the attack. Historically, combat engineers manned the crossroads, but there were companies of 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> line troops in the immediate vicinity, as well as a gaggle of armor, artillery and mortars. On the German side, the 2nd Panzer Division consisted of a wide variety of troop types, from relatively low grade Volksgrenadiers to crack Panzergrenadiers with an equally wide array of armor in support...notably, panthers and the ubiquitous StuG IIIs. Historically, the Germans bombarded the village and then sent Volksgrenadiers straight up the road with some armor support.

As it turned out, creating the Village of Marnach on ASL geomorphic boards proved rather difficult. I had one contemporary photo of the village to work with. After reviewing all of the geomorphic boards I finally settled on creating a village with overlays. This proved no small feat either, as I wanted to limit the overlays to 4, as this seems to be the pain threshold for most ASLers. Any more than 4 overlays, and you risk the scenario will not be widely played.

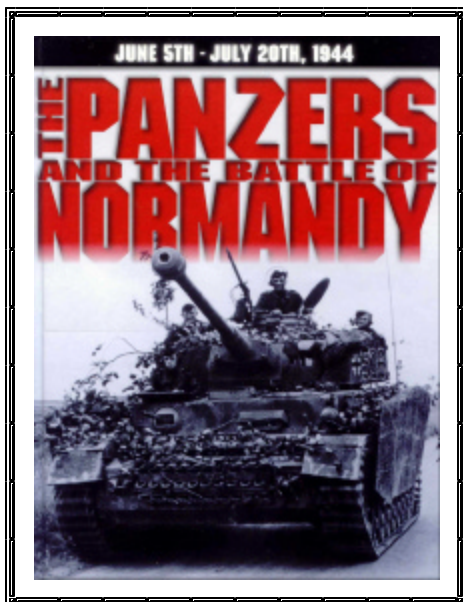
As I said, the first incarnation of TMS was at WCM IV. The scenario saw service again six months later, in a revised format that might be described as “semi-D.Y.O.” for a One Day Tournament at Matt Cicero's house. The design concept of TMS was well received at both events by everyone who played it. When we decided to launch our “playtest project” early last year, Matt Romey suggested that I dust my old warhorse off, convert it completely to variable OoB, and submit it for playtest. I must say, the Melee Pack I version is an improvement from my original and I have Matt and the fine SoCalASL playtest team to thank for it. Between the thorough going-over it got from the playtest team and the workout it received in its earlier versions, TMS is probably the most playtested of all the scenarios in the pack. TMS had a long road to get into Melee Pack I. I'm pleased and proud its there.

### **Things to remember about Marnach...**

This scenario, like Bleeding, builds through a series of clashes into a climax around the last American bastion. Look over the Cheat Sheet before you choose your forces. Remember the winter camouflage rules. Remember that grain is woods. You may need to go over the Inexperienced Personnel rules. Go over the American setup special rule carefully.

...and that's a wrap for Melee Pack I. We hope you have as much fun playing these scenarios as we did developing them! -ed.

## Book Review: The Panzers and the Battle of Normandy by Matt Cicero



Bernage's effort, translated into English by Anthony Kemp, is a detailed account of the successes and failures of the German armored forces opposing the Allied landings in France in 1944. Bernage has captured the tank commander's view of the battles that raged in the six weeks that followed D-Day. In fact, the book's narrative flows literally day by day at points, giving the reader a clear sense of what was or was not accomplished during that time. This frame of reference is particularly interesting in the strategic sense as the reader gets a feel for how long higher authorities took to make decisions and how quickly tactical situations changed and required immediate attention.

Panzers contains several informative pages illustrating the organization and effective strengths of German armored units in the western theater in the summer of 1944. Scenario designers will appreciate the detail though it becomes far more useful when combined with the narrative. Also included are a host of photos, diagrams and maps of the combatants, battles and ground fought over. There are pages illustrating uniforms of the panzer troops and some of the more prevalent vehicles. Color unit insignia, a table of rank equivalents and a report on the status of German armored forces in Normandy written by Guderian to Hitler on June 28, 1944 round things out and add a nice touch. And yes, there is a rather extensive bibliography.

ISBN: 2 84048 135 9

The narrative is easy to follow if a bit dry at times. Bernage is at his best when discussing small unit actions, often relying on the supplied maps to illustrate the larger movements of forces. Particular attention is paid to the individuals who fought against the Allies...the drivers, loaders and tank commanders. Given the preponderance of German armored formations near the city of Caen, it is no wonder that a large portion of the book is spent discussing the battles and maneuvers against Montgomery's British and Canadian troops. One soon becomes intimately acquainted with the formations involved including the material makeup, leadership and morale of such units as the 12<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Division, the 21<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division, the Panzer-Lehr Division and the Hitlerjugend Division. We meet such personages as SS-Obersturmbannführer Max Wünsche, SS-Obersturmführer Rudolf von Ribbentrop and SS-Obersturmführer Michael Wittmann. We get a feel for the effectiveness of the many different vehicles employed in the fighting by the Germans, from Panzer IVs and StuGs to Panthers and Tigers. We also see how despite significant local successes, the lack of significant reinforcements crippled the German armored formations and led ultimately to the Allied breakout from the beaches.

**Panzers** is a solid book. I think it will appeal to the historian and to the scenario designer equally. It provides a nice overview of the action and a great deal of detail about small unit fighting. It is a book focused on the German point of view. For some this may be a significant shortfall since detailed listings of the British, Canadian and American formations are not included.





# ASL Etiquette: Staying Out of Trouble

By Jim Aikens

Recently on the ASLML there was a rather long discussion on how close players stick to the Advanced Sequence of Play (ASOP) during play, particularly with regard to 'take-backs' or out of sequence play corrections. On one side of the discussion was one of Canada's finest players, Jim McCloud, and a few others who argued that the ASOP should be strictly adhered to in virtually every instance. Weighing in on the other side was my ASL buddy Wynn Polnicky and ASLML agitator-in-chief, Tate Rogers. They argued that the ASOP should be a guide but in practice there was a fair amount of wiggle room in its application.

My goal in this article is to offer up a few tips for new players or players new to the tournament scene...and not to recount the details of the debate or try to tell an experienced player how to play. I've played ASL all over the country and styles tend to vary somewhat from area to area. So I'm going to stick to what's typical play at SoCalASL events. For the most part, the vast majority of players come down more or less on the side of Wynn Polnicky; they tend to play a fairly loose game. But that's not to say they all do. While I have never played a game through a SoCal ASL event that used a McCloud-like interpretation of the ASOP, there are certain things you'll definitely need to remember.

In your Rally Phase, your first MMC can use self-rally. I would say fully half of SoCalASL will expect you to stick with this rule; it has to be first. I've found most SoCalASLers to be otherwise pretty lenient in the Rally Phase, particularly with recover and repair. The important thing to remember is that a unit can only do one thing during the Rally Phase. If they rally, they can't then pick up or repair a SW. As long as you can remember that, you should be safe.

In the Prep Fire Phase, most SoCalASLers are going to stick to the rule that you have to fire SMOKE before anything else. There are a lot of good reasons for this and most of them are obvious.

Next comes the radio attempt/OBA. Again, most SoCalers are going to want you to do this action before you start firing your other units. But if you can remember to do these things first, you're pretty much home-free with the rest of your Prep Firing.

In the Movement Phase, I've never seen a player who said that once you take your hand off a piece you can't move it again. Frankly, I hope I never do. Generally, most players are even pretty flexible about letting you change your mind during movement, as long as you don't trigger an event. For example, say you're moving an infantry unit, no fire has occurred, and you realize you should have by-passed a hex to save a movement point you'll need. Most players will let you re-count it. BUT, if you accidentally moved into a hex and your opponent called a First Fire, it is very bad form to ask to take that back. Same goes for Residual attacks, mines, OBA, air attacks, etc. In some game groups, players allow free LOS checks before firing. This NEVER occurs in SoCalASL games, if you shoot, and the shot is blocked, too bad, that's part of the game. On the other hand, it is perfectly acceptable to use any amount of acrobatics to eye-ball a shot before you take it, even if it means moving counters out of the way. I'll admit that I've gotten down with my eye practically on the map-board to sight a shot, often to the amusement (or annoyance) of my opponent.

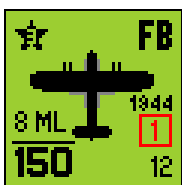
In the Rout Phase, a unit usually has the option to voluntarily break. The rules say you need to declare voluntary breaks at the beginning of the Rout Phase. I would say at least half of SoCal ASLers try to stick with this rule. Get in the practice of doing that.

This list is far from exhaustive but I've tried to cover the most common circumstances where the ASOP tends to get in the way. Now that I've dispensed with a few generalities, I'm going to make you suffer through my personal philosophy of how I like to play.

First and foremost, I play every game of ASL for fun. I don't care if I'm playing in my game room on Thursday night or for a plaque (and I've played for quite a few of those over the years), I play the same way every time. For me, the camaraderie and friendships I've made over the years is what ASL is all about. The only bad game of ASL is one where one party or the other had hard feelings about something that occurred in the game. With that in mind, I try to play every game without asking to take something back. And I try to remind my opponent, in a friendly way, if he needs to do something first. For example, if it's my opponent's Prep Phase, I'll say "Ok, Prep. Do you have any smoke to place? None, ok, ready for OBA...". Following along the important parts of the ASOP with my opponent is a game mechanic for me. If it means I'll never win ASLOK or WCM as a result, I don't really care. But let me tell you something, this year's ASLOK champ, Chad Cummins, plays this way. Same for this year's WCM champ, Shel Ryland and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishers, Eric Morton and John Bibler. All of these guys take a "fun first" approach to ASL. I have played them all, and in the case of Chad and Eric, more times than I can count. In my eyes, these guys personify what good ASL is all about; playing a great game and always being pleasure to have across the game table. If you're a new player, or new to the tournament scene, I hope you think about that the next time you play.

## Did you Know?

Next time you are designing/playing a scenario that includes U.S. FBs with bombs, you may want to review G17.4. If the scenario date is in/after August 1944 and the Amis are fighting Germans, those FB bombs just might be filled with Napalm! Now wouldn't THAT be a fun surprise...



*-Matt Cicero*

# SWEET!...OUCH!

*I thought it would be fun to gather some anecdotes from WCM VI.  
Matt Romey, Eric Morton and I decided to share our experiences... -ed.*

## **Matt Romey: He giveth...**

Bread Factory #2. The 9-1 has to roll for SSR-induced berserk status. Mine gets it on turn 1 on a dr of 1. Since no KEU are in LOS, he Battle Hardens to a 9-2. Next turn, the LMG-toting 238 HS he is stacked with gets HoB, Battle Hardening and creating a hero. Then, the original 9-1 (now a 9-2) HoB's! He Battle Hardens AGAIN, to a 10-2, and also goes heroic.

Now, these guys end up in the street, Adjacent to one of the VC stone buildings. The LMGs and hero's FP, with heroic and leader DRMs make it a 8+0 shot vs. the building! The enemy in the VC building eventually breaks, my guys waltz in and take it!

Of course, the original 9-1 (now a 10-2) still had to roll for berserk status - he gets it the next turn, runs into the street bringing the whole gang with him, and dies a horrible death.

Unbelievable.

## **Eric Morton: A Tales of Two Snakes...**

SWEET. My fifth game, against Chris Castellana, we played Zon with the Wind. I had the Germans. Chris' Americans steadily attacked until on the next to last turn, he moved into position to exit enough units to win the game in his next MPh. He only needed to knock out the force of Germans that I had covering the exit hexes. To that end, he advanced his 9-2 and two 7-4-7 squads into position to hose down my troops in the next DFPh and, if necessary, PFPh. I had one 88L left and I shot in my PFPh at his kill stack - miss, no ROF. I intensive fired the 88L. Hit! Results DR: Snakes! Random Selection = both 7-4-7 KIA and Mr. 9-2 broken. That essentially decided the game, since Chris had to do a paratrooper banzai to try to get his exit VP - to no avail.

OUCH. In my next and last game, against Herman Frettlor, I had the Americans and Herman had the Germans in a SP scenario - the name I can't remember. Late in the game, I had a 9-2 stacked with two 6-6-7 squads that I needed to move. The neurons in my brain must have fired in the wrong order because I had the stack bypass a woods hex for no particular reason (they could have gone into the woods and stayed out of LOS). Herman revealed a concealed HS w/MMG and 8-1 that had a LOS (through an orchard) to a vertice I crossed. Results DR: Snakes! Random Selection = both 6-6-7 KIA and Mr. 9-2 broken. That helped get Herman back into the game. I won (barely) by breaking his last MMC on the VC hill in my last AFPh.

It isn't often that one sees two eerily similar occurrences in consecutive games.

## **Matt Cicero: Dicey-Dicey, Nicey-Nicey!**

Playing Han Sur Neid against Eric Johnson and my Germans have pushed up to the woods to the right of the VC hex. I have a StuG adjacent to and facing the woods in a vain hope of holding off the Baz shots that are sure to come if anyone moves up into sight. Eric assault moves his concealed 9-2/squad/Baz stack adjacent to the StuG. StuG fires...Hit! 2MC! 9-2 rolls his MC...HOBs and becomes a Heroic 10-2! Yikes! StuG takes the IF shot...Hit! 3MC! 9-2 rolls his MC...12! And you just knew the Wound Severity was going to kill him before the die was ever rolled... A dead leader and a broken Baz-toting squad left Eric looking pretty thin...

# LEGIONS OF WWII: The U.S 28th Infantry Division *by Matt Cicero*

## Division Name

United States 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

## Division Nickname

Keystone Division

## Division Insignia

A red keystone, symbolic of the State of Pennsylvania, known as the Keystone State.

## Division Slogan

"Fire and Movement"

## Nationality/ Date Created

American / The Office of the Chief of Military History certified that General Order No. 1, dated March 12, 1879, officially established the Division, though elements of the Division existed as early as 1747.

## WWII Deployments

26 Sep 1943: V Corp, ETOUSA. 22 Oct 1943: V Corp, First Army. 14 Apr 1944: XX Corp, Third Army. 1 Aug 1944: XIX Corp, First Army, 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group. 19 Nov 1944: VIII Corp, First Army, 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group. 20 Dec 1944: Third Army, 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group. 9 Jan 1945: Fifteenth Army, 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group. Returned to U.S.: August 1945 (HQ). Inactivated: 13 December 1945, Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

## Commanding Officers

MG Edward Martin (Feb to Dec 1941), MG J Garesche Ord (Jan to May 1942), MG Omar N Bradley (Jun 1942 to Jan 1943), MG Lloyd Brown (Jan 1943 to Jul 1944), BG James E Wharton (one day in Aug 1944: while visiting a regiment a few hours after taking command he was fatally wounded), MG Norman D Cota (Aug 1944 to inactivation)

## Major Engagements

Activated: 17 February 1941 at Indiantown Gap PA. Overseas: 8 October 1943 for ETO. Campaigns: Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe. Days of combat: 196.

## WWII Distinctions/Medals

Individual Awards: MH-1; DSC-16; SS-258; LM-4; SM-16; BSM-2,029; AM-92. Foreign Awards: 109th Infantry regiment awarded the French Croix de Guerre for 28 Jan to 2 Feb 1945 action in Colmar, France per French decree #565, dated 27 March 1945.

## Traditions/Special Notes

- The 28th Infantry Division is the oldest division in the armed forces of the United States.
- The 108th Field Artillery Battalion of the 28<sup>th</sup> dates back to 1840 and was the first unit to use the name "National Guard", an adaptation of Napoleon's Garde Nationale.
- One of the 28<sup>th</sup>'s great achievements of WWI was the rescue of the famous "Lost Battalion" of the 77th Infantry Division in

the Argonne.

- The Germans called the division the "Bloody Bucket" because of the blood-red keystone insignia and furious fighting tactics during the Normandy Campaign.
- On September 11, 1944, the 28th claimed the distinction of being the first American unit to enter Germany.

## A Brief History

Elements of the Division can trace their histories back to 1747, when Benjamin Franklin organized his battalion of "Associators" in Philadelphia. Other Pennsylvania units of the 28th Infantry Division had their beginnings in the Revolutionary War. Troop A, 1st Squadron, 104th Cavalry, was organized on Nov. 17, 1774. The 109th Artillery Regiment was formed Oct. 17, 1775 as the 24th Connecticut Militia. Both units served with distinction in General George Washington's Continental Army during the war. On Oct. 27, 1918, the Red Keystone was designated the shoulder sleeve insignia of the Division. The distinctive Keystone was the second shoulder sleeve patch to receive official Army approval.



During WWI, over 14,000 battle casualties were suffered by the division. Its fierce combat abilities earned it the title "Iron Division" from General of the Armies John J. Pershing.

On Feb. 17, 1941, the 28th Division was ordered into federal service. The Division's intensive training agenda culminated in its deployment to England on Oct. 8, 1943. After another 10 months of training in England and Wales, the first elements of the Division entered combat on July 22, 1944, landing on the beaches of Normandy. From Normandy, the 28th advanced across western France, finding itself in

the thick of hedgerow fighting through towns such as Percy, Montbray, Montguoray, Gathemo and St. Sever de Calvados by the end of July 1944.

In a movement north toward the Seine in late August, the Division succeeded in trapping the remnant of the German 7th Army through Vorneuil, Breteuil, Damville, Conches, Le Neubourg and Elbeuf before entering Paris to join in its liberation. The famous photograph of American troops before the Arc de Triomphe, marching in battle parade down the Champs Elysees, shows the men of 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. The advance continued through the Forest of Compeigne, La Fere, St. Quentin, Laon, Rethel, Sedan, Mezieres, Bouillon and eventually across the Meuse River into Belgium. The Keystone soldiers averaged 17 miles a day against the resistance of German "battle groups." The city of Arlon, Belgium, fell to a task force as the Division fanned out into Luxembourg in early September.

The Division entered Germany and after hammering away in assaults which destroyed or captured 153 pillboxes and bunkers, the Division moved north toward the Siegfried Line, clearing the Monschau Forest of German forces. After a brief respite, the Keystone soldiers made another move northward to the Hürtgen

*(Continued on page 12)*



Forest in late September. Attacks in the forest began November 2, 1944. The 28th Infantry Division stormed into Vossenack, Kommerscheidt and Schmidt amid savage fighting and heavy losses.

By November 10, the depleted 28th began to move south, where it held a 25-mile sector of the front line along the Our River. It was against this thinly fortified line that the Germans unleashed the full force of their winter Ardennes offensive. Nearly overwhelmed by the weight of enemy armor and personnel, the Division nevertheless maintained its defense of this sector long enough to throw Von Runstedt's assault off schedule.

Having sustained a devastating 15,000 casualties, the 28th withdrew to rest, resupply and bring in replacements. Within three weeks, the Division was back in action. By January 1945, Division soldiers had moved south where they served with the French First Army in the reduction of the "Colmar Pocket." The 109th Infantry Regiment was awarded the French Croix de Guerre for its action which helped lead to the liberation of Colmar, the last major French city in German hands.

By February 23, 1945, the Division returned north to the American First Army. The 28th was in position along the Olef River when an attack was launched on March 6, 1945, carrying the Division to the Ahr River. Schleiden, Germund, Kall, Sotenich, Sistig and Blankenheim all fell in a rapid advance. By early April, the Division moved west of the Rhine and took up occupation duties in the area north of Aachen along the Holland-German border. Permanent occupation came two weeks later at the Saurland and Rhonish areas. In early July 1945, the 28th began its redeployment to the U.S. The Division was deactivated on December 13, 1945.

### Heroes of the Keystone Division

CLARK, FRANCIS J. , *Medal of Honor*

Rank and organization: Technical Sergeant, U.S. Army, Company K, 109th Infantry, 28th Infantry Division.

Place and date: Near Kalborn, Luxembourg, 12 September 1944; near Sevenig, Germany, 17 September 1944.

Entered service at: Salem, N.Y.

Birth: Whitehall, N.Y.

G.O. No.: 77, 10 September 1945.

### Citation:

"He fought gallantly in Luxembourg and Germany. On 12 September 1944, Company K began fording the Our River near Kalborn, Luxembourg, to take high ground on the opposite bank. Covered by early morning fog, the 3d Platoon, in which T/Sgt. Clark was squad leader, successfully negotiated the crossing; but when the 2d Platoon reached the shore, withering automatic and small-arms fire ripped into it, eliminating the platoon leader and platoon sergeant and pinning down the troops in the open. From his comparatively safe position, T/Sgt. Clark crawled alone across a field through a hail of bullets to the stricken troops. He led the platoon to safety and then unhesitatingly returned into the fire-swept area to rescue a wounded soldier, carrying him to the American line while hostile gunners tried to cut him down. Later, he led his squad and men of the 2d Platoon in dangerous sorties against strong enemy positions to weaken them by lightning-like jabs. He assaulted an enemy machinegun with hand grenades, killing 2 Germans. He roamed the front and flanks, dashing to-

ward hostile weapons, killing and wounding an undetermined number of the enemy, scattering German patrols and, eventually, forcing the withdrawal of a full company of Germans heavily armed with automatic weapons. On 17 September, near Sevenig, Germany, he advanced alone against an enemy machinegun, killed the gunner and forced the assistant to flee. The Germans counterattacked, and heavy casualties were suffered by Company K. Seeing that 2 platoons lacked leadership, T/Sgt. Clark took over their command and moved among the men to give encouragement. Although wounded on the morning of 18 September, he refused to be evacuated and took up a position in a pillbox when night came. Emerging at daybreak, he killed a German soldier setting up a machinegun not more than 5 yards away. When he located another enemy gun, he moved up unobserved and killed 2 Germans with rifle fire. Later that day he voluntarily braved small-arms fire to take food and water to members of an isolated platoon. T/Sgt. Clark's actions in assuming command when leadership was desperately needed, in launching attacks and beating off counterattacks, in aiding his stranded comrades, and in fearlessly facing powerful enemy fire, were strikingly heroic examples and put fighting heart into the hard-pressed men of Company K."

### ASL Scenarios Featuring the 28<sup>th</sup> Division

*U6 "Action at Kommerscheidt":* The 112<sup>th</sup> had taken and then lost Schmidt to a German counterattack by the 89<sup>th</sup> Division and the 116<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division. The German attack gathered momentum as it ground on towards the battered defenders remaining in Kommerscheidt.

*SP 3 "Duel at Reuler":* Tanks from the 9<sup>th</sup> Armored Division arrive in Reuler to support the 110<sup>th</sup> Infantry's attempt to clear out a few panzers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division during the early phase of the Ardennes offensive.

*SP 13 "Stopped Cold":* Company E of the 110<sup>th</sup> attacks toward Marnach in the opening phase of the Ardennes offensive in order to help delay the advance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division and to try to prevent the overrun of Company B of the 110<sup>th</sup>, holding out in Marnach.

*A9 "Midnight Massacre":* The 304<sup>th</sup> PzGr Reg of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division launches a night attack using flamethrowing halftracks against the 110<sup>th</sup> Infantry dug into a newly captured series of pillboxes in the Siegfried Line

*Ok, we should probably also note that THREE of the scenarios in Melee Pack I feature elements of the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division ! That's right, Curtain Kall [MP2], Holy Ground [MP3] and The Marnach Strongpoint [MP6] all feature the 28th. Kinda takes the mystery out of why I picked this particular division to review, huh?*

**FIRE AND MOVEMENT!**



*("President's Corner" Continued from page 1)*

nances as Treasurer. When he has nothing else on his plate, he also edits the Club's Newsletter. Particular recognition should go to him for laying out and publishing **Melee Pack I**. Paul Simonsen tracked all the games at WCM and crunched the numbers to figure out who won. Paul also designed and maintains our Club Web Site. If you haven't visited it lately, you should. SoCalASL now hosts the ASL Crossroads, the largest ASL scenario database anywhere, a huge selection of scenario AARs and, most recently, online ordering for **Melee Pack I** through PayPal. Matt Romey spearheads the "playtest project" that produced our scenario pack; tracking the scenarios, setting up playtests, following up on results and updating each version, Matt brought it all together in time for WCM VI and now is hard at work on the next Melee Pack. Robert Feinstein managed to do yet another bang-up job on the WCM tee shirts this year (and if you didn't get one, the same fantastic graphic was used for the cover of **Melee Pack I**), plus, with Matt Cicero, he hosted the Early Bird event. Dave Nicholas once again stood at the ready to assist new players in the "7-0 Leaders" program and secured the beautiful plaques we gave away at WCM. Shel Ryland played Ringmaster to "The Hero Game" on Saturday night, taking a break from his march to victory in the Melee. Dave Reinking, with almost no notice, compiled the scenario lists for all the mini-tournaments and the Melee recommended scenario list with valuable input from Matt Evans and Rob Hammond. District Directors Rob Feinstein, Scott Thompson and Rob Stai, did great service by the Club, serving as the pointmen for our new players and members program, while taking the time to personally contact every member in their district to make sure they knew about WCM.

I can't begin to tell you what a pleasure it is to work with these guys. Every one of them gives their time selflessly to make sure our Club is the absolute best in the world. And with guys like these, it will continue to be just that for a long time.

With the closing of WCM, we enter a new Club year. We're off to a great start; we have already signed up 4 new members. I want to welcome John Bibler, Steve Sulzby, Rick Marks and Chris Chapman into our Club. Also, I want to welcome Dave Rosner, who has been elected North Director in place of Rob Stai, who stepped down this year. Our Club is starting the year quite well off financially; I'll let Matt post a full treasurer's report once we have a budget in place for 2003. We're already working on our upcoming events. Our Spring One Day Tournament will be on May 24th at Bryan Earll's house in Monrovia and will be a 'beer and barbecue' theme. Our Summer One Day Tournament will be in August at Biola. Our Fall One Day Tournament will be in November with the location to be determined. Keep an eye on our Club Website, [www.socalasl.com](http://www.socalasl.com) for the most up-to-date info on our Club events. As for West Coast Melee VII, we are looking into some location alternatives in Orange and L.A. Counties. We will also be making a change of format that I think will offer something for everyone while still maintaining its flexibility. I will expand more on that as the year moves forward.

I hope to see you all at Bryan's house in May.

**President@socalasl.com**

*("Roll Call" Continued from page 3)*

Avalon Hill had any sense, they would have stuck to what worked and produced a few more Streets of Fire modules.

**HTB!: What do you think about DYO? Ever tried it?**

**RF:** I was a DYO fanatic for many years. In fact, the San Diego ASL Club perfected a double-blind DYO system that I still rank among the best ASL experiences I've had. On the downside, DYO games can sometimes go sideways on you, and that's a bummer. One case in point involved my attacking with cavalry and paratroopers against a mechanized force surrounding AA Guns. It was not pretty...

**HTB!: CG versus one-shot games...any preference?**

**RF:** I no longer have the time or space for campaign games, so one-shot scenarios win by default. Years ago I did play a number of CGs such as RB, KGP and PB. I really enjoyed some aspects of them, but I generally don't like scenarios or CGs where one side has to be completely annihilated.

**HTB!: Best ASL experience...**

**RF:** Going to ASLOK with Eric Johnson, Jim Aikens and other SoCal ASLers is way way up there on the ASL-o-meter. However, my best ASL experiences are probably playing ASL under circumstances that illustrate what being a hard-code ASLer is all about. Specifically, I've taken my ASL set on surf trips, off-roading through Baja California and on a New Year's cruise with my and Eric's families in tow.

**HTB!: Worst ASL experience...**

**RF:** Two bad experiences come to mind. Someone accidentally dumped a thermos-full of coffee into my Combat Info counter tray. Another time, on my way to ASLOK, I checked my ASL set at the San Diego airport, only to watch it fall off the conveyor belt on its way to the plane. My pleas to retrieve it were utterly ignored by the

morons behind the counter. When I got to Cleveland (and my ASL set didn't), I raised some hell. They ended up getting it to me two days later.

**HTB!: What Would You Like To Try Next?**

**RF:** I want to see our club's core playtest group sustain our scenario creation effort by producing subsequent Melee Packs. I consider playtesting to be a great use of my limited ASL time, and I am proud to have contributed to this effort.

**HTB!: How could the game be better?**

**RF:** The single greatest improvement to the ASL system would be to have more new players join our ranks. Towards this end, there are a number of ASL issues that need to be addressed. First and foremost is the lack of an inexpensive and palatable introductory version of the game to get newbies into the fold. Second, the rulebook needs to go electronic. Although this is incompatible with any conceivable MMP/Hasbro business model, it would spread ASL far and wide. Third, MMP/Hasbro need to embrace VASL, give Rodney everything he deserves, and elevate ASL into the 21st century. Lastly, all us aging ASL fathers need to ensure that our children grow into the game over the next 10-20 years. I look forward to the ASL world's first Father-Daughter team tournament. My daughter is only 5, but she is showing interest in ASL stuff.

**HTB!: Top 3 things You'd Recommend For Playing ASL?**

- RF:**
1. Play as many different players as you can!
  2. Go to tournaments, especially ASLOK and WCM!
  3. Never give up!

**HTB!: Any Final Comments?**

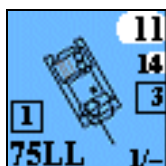
**RF:** The SoCal ASL Club is a great part of a great game. We are so fortunate to have so many great ASLers in our area. Being part of a community makes all the difference. Long live ASL!

**Thanks Robert!**

# Getting the Best \*BANG\* for your BPV! *By Matt Cicero*

## TANK DESTROYERS

	JagdPanzer IV/70	M10 GMC
BPV	66	65
Availability	8/44 - 45	3/43 - 45
Movement	11 Fully Tracked	15 Fully Tracked
Size	+1 Modifier; 26 Tons	+0 Modifier; 29.5 Tons
Armor: Hull	14 Front, 3 Side/Rear	8 Front, 3 Side/Rear
Armor: Turret	14 Front, 4 Side/Rear	8 Front, 3 Side/Rear
Turret	Closed, NT	Open, ST
Main Gun	Bow 75LL (23TK)	Turret 76L (17TK)
ROF	1	2
Ammo	AP, HE7	AP, HE, A <sup>5</sup> E <sup>4</sup> /6 <sup>5</sup> (20TK), s5 <sup>5</sup>
MGs	BMG: 1	AAMG: 4
SMOKE?	sN9	sP5
Crew Survival	4	7
Notes	Schuerzen Possible	APCR NA in Italy and PTO APCR in Europe: Aug 1944 Can have Culin for +5 BPV



Whether you're setting up a little DYO, designing a new scenario or just tickled to know everything trivial...getting the most out of your hard-earned BPV is the name of the game! I decided to take a closer look at a pair of vehicles with similar BPV and similar purpose and see how they look side by side. Up on our showcase today, we've got two of the roughest, toughest tank-killers east of the Atlantic. Let's see how they match up...

First, we have the JgPz IV/70. Heavy armor, a big whompin' gun with great range, small size and a closed top make this TD the cat's meow! But whoa, we may need some landsers to get behind and push this big dog with its low MP. And man, a big gun is nice but with no turret, you may not be lining up a shot very well if your opponent decides to MOVE at all. And what's with the HE?? Sheesh! No MGs ain't great but you do have the Snoogie-Woofer for CC...still, you might want to keep a few soldaten around to shoot those pesky enemy infantry.

Next we have the M10 GMC. Good mobility, great run-and-gun ROF, a turret, unlimited HE, APCR and excellent crew survival make this TD a GI favorite! So, who left off the roof so that every Tom, Dick and Heinz can take a shot at your boyos? Maybe the same guy that forgot that extra layer of armor...tanks DO shoot back on occasion. And yeah, funky ammo is great...of course, your loader has to remember to grab some of the RED shells before you drive out of the ammo dump! But never fear...you can have a Culin device...oh, wow.

They're both beauts! And available in over a dozen cammo patterns off the lot...

For my money...er...BPV...I'd have to go with the M10. Unless you actually faced enemy armor...then I'd take the JgPz. Unless I was facing lots of enemy infantry, too...that would make the M10 my choice. Of course, wide open terrain would lean me over to the JgPz....

So...which one would YOU choose?



### Upcoming Events...

05/15/03: *Hit The Beach!* V8N2  
05/24/03: Beer and BBQ Blaze-Fest at Bryan's  
08/10/03: *Hit The Beach!* V8N3  
08/15/03: Dog Days of Summer One-Day

### The Southern California ASL Club

President: Jim Aikens  
President@socalasl.com

VP/Newsletter Editor: Matthew Cicero  
Editor@socalasl.com

Web Director: Paul Simonsen  
Webmaster@socalasl.com

Playtest/Challenge Coordinator: Matt Romey  
ChallengeCup@socalasl.com

Los Angeles Regional Director: David Rosner  
LosAngeles@socalasl.com

Orange/Inland Regional Director: Scott Thompson  
OrangeInland@socalasl.com

San Diego Regional Director: Robert Feinstein  
SanDiego@socalasl.com

#### Contributors

Jim Aikens, Matt Cicero, Bryan Earll, Robert Feinstein, Eric Morton, Matt Romey

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